"PRECIPITADO MUCHO"

By HYLAND C. KIRK,
Pay Department United States Army.

No one traveling across the ford and along the road would have noticed anything peculiar about the opposite bank of the river. The tall grass was waving naturally, and the nipa and banana trees swaying gently in the breeze cast their moving shadows as if they covered nothing more harmful than an iguana or other straying denizen of the stream. Yet not three rods distant from the opposite bank were concealed some forty hombres, each armed with a death-dealing Mauser rifle. Their uniforms resembled working clothes, it is true, but that in no wise affected the tragically severe character of their purpose, whatever that was.

The main road from Capiz to Dao runs nearly parallel to the Panay river at this point, and about a mile beyond Panitan, a crossroad from the east fords the stream connecting with the main thoroughfare. On both sides of the crossroad beyond the stream, concealed by trees and foliage, the riflemen were located.

None of the people in the town seemed to know of their presence. Taos came along with bull carts and others walking, smoking their cigarillos and tabaccos placidly enough. Carts from the opposite side of the stream descended the sloping excavation and swashed across behind the wallowing steeds, others from the barrio passed in the opposite direction, and beyond the sound of the water, the yell of the driver, the low murmur of insects and an occasional bird-note, quietude reigned.

There was no reason, it is true, why the presence of an armed body of insurrectos should have been suspected in that neighborhood. The barrio was peaceful and the native inhabitants, chiefly laborers, were some of them employed in one department or another of the United States government service, and besides there was one company of regulars seven miles furtner out at Dao, another sixteen miles westward at Mambusao, and a third at Dumarao, eighteen miles directly south.

About a week before this from one of the insurrecto companies serving under General Diocno, commander-in-chief in the province of Capiz, Panay, one of the soldiers, a thick-set, stolid looking Tao named Valeriano, disappeared one day, a circumstance which excited some surprise among his comrades. Why had he gone and where? Inquiry of the company commander elicited the rather doubtful information that it was "no importe," which merely increased the curiosity and deepened the mystery of his disappearance. Valeriano was not an especially good soldier; he was too slow both to understand and to execute, but there was one thing in which he surpassed all his comrades and possibly the entire command, and that was in his knowledge of the carabao. He was an expert on that subject in a practical way. He had been born and reared with them, played with the calves, nursed the adults in sickness, even on one occasion curing the frightful garrotillo and preventing an epidemic. He had caught and tamed wild ones, had trained tame ones for special work and taught them tricks of quite a surprising character. He knew their periods of life, how long they will live; knew just how much a carabao knows and what he can be depended upon to do under ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. Valeriano often smiled when he heard others talking about the carabao in a derogatory way, for he knew very well that when properly handled even this clumsy, slow, patient, bulky creature can be made to display some astonishingly strong points.

It was known to his company commander that Valeriano had in his possession a document containing his name and headed:

PAG SUMPA NGA DILI MAG BUDHI,
(Oath of Allegiance),

which would be sufficient to satisfy any American he might encounter that he was a loyal amigo.

The day before the disappearance of Valeriano a courier from an insurrecto colonel located at Dumangas, Panay, had brought word to the insurrecto commander in eastern Capiz that the chief pagador of the American forces in the Department of Visayas had just left Iloilo on a government launch to pay the troops on the east and north coast of Panay. He would probably be occupied one day at Sara on the east coast, another at the town of Capiz, capital of that province, and following his usual custom, on the third day would make an inland trip to Dao, Mambusao and Dumarao, to pay the garrisons at these stations; thence he would return to Capiz and continue his trip around the coast. The dispatch cited the rather interesting circumstance that on the down trip the pagador's strong box would contain over $200,000 (Mexican currency), a desirable acquisition certainly, and the statement indicated a remarkable knowledge of the facts.

Quite in accord with this dispatch, the American paymaster having completed the payment of troops at Capiz, proceeded inland to pay the interior posts of the province. As Uncle Sam had provided no mule flesh in the animate form at this period the money chests had to be conveyed by bull carts, of which there were two, the animals being changed every few miles on the trip. The major, clerk and lieutenant commanding the escort were mounted, but the twenty enlisted men traveled on foot.

It was the month of May, the weather very dry and hot, with the sun shining fiercely. The draught steeds were chiefly carabao, which by the yelling and prodding of their Visayan drivers, were forced along at a very slow gait of three or four miles an hour, stirring up the heated dust in a way that was anything but agreeable to the human element of the cortege. To avoid the dust, the greater part of the escort kept in advance of the carts.

There were booths along the way with fruit, nuts, tuba and other things for sale, and many of the escort sought to allay the intensity of the heat by copious draughts, from time to time as they moved along, of sap from the cocoanut trees. Whether this innocent beverage contained something stronger or not, quite a number of those who drank it became slightly exhilarated and seven or eight so violently ill that they had to be carried in the carts. They reached Panitan, ten miles from Capiz, about 2 p. m., and halted for lunch beyond the two. While their horses were being watered and fresh steeds put on the carts, the main portion of the escort were reclining in the road in front as the most available place, it being hard and dry at that point. Presently one of the new cocheros, a thickset, stolid-looking Visayan, brought out a large black carabao, with wide-spreading horns, and proceeded to hitch him onto the foremost cart containing the coin.

"Look at the ugly scars on that beast's nose," said 'Gene Hopkins, the pay clerk, who was also seated in the road some distance ahead.

"I say, isn't he a ferocious looking brute?" remarked Sergeant Kelly. "I should hate to meet him alone in the dark."

Major Sternberg, of a decidedly optimistic turn, who was standing farther back from the road and had overheard these remarks, said quietly: "He's not handsome, that's a fact, but a good strong animal, though."

The cochero patted the monster's neck. The petted creature licked his own scarred nostrils and snorted as he noticed the white faces and uniforms of the American soldados. A carabao usually seems to share the feeling of his native master toward white faces and foreign soldiers. The cochero wound his guide rope around the animal's neck, temporarily to all appearances, until he could adjust the yoke. Five of the sick soldiers took their places in the forward cart. The cochero settled the yoke in place and stepped back, giving a peculiar click for the beast to go. The animal took one step slowly forward till the strain of the yoke was fairly against his shoulders, and then—a series of shrieks arose along the line of men in front:

"Hell!" "Get out of the way!" "He's mad, stop him!" That huge, clumsy, slow-moving brute, in a single instant changed into a veritable four-legged locomotive of energy and speed.

The first jump and all but one of the sick men were tossed out of the cart like so many sticks of wood, while those on the road in front went scurrying away like flying fish from a steamer when a school is struck.

"Stop him, shoot him!" yelled the major, following on foot at full speed with revolver in hand, as there was really no time to secure and mount his horse—"he's got the money!"

Two soldiers, one on either side, endeavored to throw their arms about the animal's neck, but were hurled off as if they had struck an express train.

There was no chance to shoot without hitting the sick soldier in the cart. The road was full of dust which rose in a streaming cloud in rear of that cyclone of flesh, blinding soldiers, lieutenant, clerk and major, chasing after the mad thing—and the cochero was sculling himself across the river.

Everything so far had turned out to Valeriano's satisfaction. He had kept the big bull carabao, that had previously killed several men who did not know how to manage him—had kept him eight hours without water, which is sufficient to make the most peaceful of carabaos raging mad. Then he had arranged a cunning contrivance of tacks and thin leather straps, fitted under the animal's yoke, so that when the yoke should set firmly back on the neck, the tacks would sink into the flesh for about half an inch. Now the plot had been developed, the animal was making for the ford to the river, where he could get water, and the pain of the tacks would cause him to keep going till he reached the other bank where forty insurrectos with rifles in place were lying flat on their noses watching for the denouement.

Meanwhile, the carabao had distanced all pursuit and was near the turn to the ford. The one sick soldier, Jack Downey, a hero in his way, who was climbing to the front rail of the cart, took in fully the desperate character of the situation. He knew there was a large amount of money in that box and the beast would get away with it unless something interferred "muy pronto." He resolved to be that something. Rising quickly he stepped on the rail and jumped—fortunately landing astride of the carabao's back. Working his way forward he grasped the huge left horn and threw his weight upon it, balancing himself with his right leg over the animal's neck.

The brute thus influenced was an excellent illustration of the law of greatest pressure and least resistance. His desire for water impelled him to keep the road to the ford, the tacks suggested that he go as quickly as possible; but the pressure on his off horn was a deflecting force which insisted on his turning to the left so strenuously that he could not resist. Not two rods from the turn to the ford the animal wheeled up the bank, gained the top and rushed ferociously for a clump of trees near the river; he would rid himself of his human tomentor and then satisfy his longing for water.

The soldier had barely time to drop on the ground clear of the cart wheels when the mad monster dashed between two stout saplings scarcely separated enough to admit his horns, smashing the wheels and body of the cart into fragments and dropping the pay box on the ground. Then he rushed down the bank and swam directly across the stream with his yoke clinging to his shoulders.

Valeriano had not yet reached the opposite side when the bull entered the water. The man had anticipated a cordial reception from the commander of the riflemen, but as he approached the teniente, who had witnessed the smash-up on the opposite shore, greeted him with a volley of Visayan and Spanish oaths, concluding with the inquiry as to why in hades and the names of the holy saints he had not remained in and driven the cart himself. To which Valeriano replied meekly:

"Abao casaquit! Precipitado mucho. No quiero." Ah grief! Very much speed. No wish to.

Then the arms of the forty were loaded in carts containing truck of various kinds, effectually concealing the equipments, and the hombres in working clothes moved off by various routes to camp.

It was a number of months afterwards before another plot was laid for the pagador on that route, when the following letter was intercepted:

"11th November, 1900.

"Mr. Roman Ilagan:

"My Dear Fellow—I have duly received your letter and am well informed of everything you say. By order of the general I tell you that we heard that the American paymaster has left Capiz in order to pay the troops, so you must do your best to prepare ambushes and take all sorts of measures to fall upon him and grasp the money. It is very important to act in a cautious manner without making much noise, but taking care not to fail in our design, because you know that we are very short of money. You will receive new instructions from the general about the case and will be helped by the detachment of X——.

"I repeat you the expression of my friendship and remain always your fellow.

"A. DECENA."

"A true copy of translation of original, the translation having been made by the official translator, Mr. Rafael Redriguez.

"E. E. HATCH,
"Captain Eighteenth United States Infantry."

The American paymaster saw a copy in Capiz a short time after it was captured; but for reasons other than the dangers suggested in the letter, did not go over the route. A company of the Eighteenth Infantry did, however. A spy reported that a bridge had been wired and that the ambush would be at that point; so half the company debouched and came down upon the ambush from the rear. There was a general skedaddle, quite a number killed and a thickset Visayan who would not run was captured. When asked why he had not attempted to escape with the rest, he replied:

"Abao casaquit! Precipitado mucho! No quiero!"

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Thought It Was Arabic.

Philadelphia Telegraph.

The daily mail of President Schurman, of Cornell University, is varied and interesting. He enjoys reading the mail, and tries to glance over most of the letters which come to him. There was one a few weeks ago, however, which he could not read. It was written in characters utterly beyond his comprehension. He turned it upside down, but could make nothing more of it. "Send it to Professor Schmit for translation," he said to his secretary at last. "I believe it is written in Persian." The learned delineator of languages Eastern worked over it for hours before he understood the characters. They were Arabic beyond a doubt, but he was not quite sure whether they belonged to the thirtieth century B. C. or the third A. D. "I will send it to Oxford for investigation," he reported. The office stenographer, a woman, was curious. "Let me see the funny thing," she begged. It was handed to her, and a moment later she began to laugh. "It's in shorthand," she cried. "Perkins system." She translated the last line thus: "Excuse me writing you in this abbreviated manner, but I've got to catch a train." The president hopes that he caught the train, but Professor Schmit will never forgive the hasty correspondent.

IN THE GOSSIP'S CORNER.

Sleep Thou beneath Thy pendant Persian rose,
Thou brave Khayyam, to whom be sweet repose;
We pour a cup in praise of Thee to-night,
Thou Poet-Priest, whose verse with joyance glows.

No somber creed of Hell and Woe is Thine;
But joy as mellow as the jocund wine—
We laugh with Thee, and bidding gloom depart,
Crown Time with chaplets from the festal vine.

Long life to Thee—for dead, Thou livest yet—
Thy Spirit send, that we may not forget
To-day we are; to-morrow is not come,
And we and Joy to-day should be well met.

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Years ago—so long that the mind of man hath well-nigh forgotten it—there was a song of which a part of the refrain was "They do such things and you see such things," or words of similar meaning. And so it is with Kentucky, even laying politics aside. There was a swell wedding down in the Bluegrass metropolis the other day, and in the published description of it there was a paragraph to the effect that "Mrs. B—— gave a reception to the wedding party, at which Mrs. B——'s Sunday-school class served the punch."

Shades of Bacchus and John Wesley! Did you ever see the like?

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"'Tis the sayson," said my friend Hogan, "whin we count up th' pinnies to say if th'll buy th' ould woman a dhriss an' th' childher some toys an' candy, an' thin go down t' th' saloon beyant th' alley an' blow in th' dollars on a tor-r-key raffle an' th' drinks f'r th' byes, jus' t' prove t' th' watchin' an' waitin' worruld thot we're rale hot stuff. Thin we wondher pfwy th' divvle it is thot the' mon behint th' bar takes his pick o' light an' darruk mate while we make our luxoorious raypast on chuck steak, onless th' ould woman's been lucky with th' washin'. 'Tis an onaven worruld at th' bist, an' we're always huntin' some way f'r to make it onavener, so's t' be able t' domn th' ither fellie."

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With smallpox and diphtheria scares on every hand, let me again remind you of the one certain preventive and cure:

Sulphate of zinc, one grain; foxglove (digitalis), one grain; half a teaspoonful of sugar; mix thoroughly with two tablespoonfuls of water; add four ounces more of water and take a teaspoonful every hour.

Either disease will disappear in a day if this treatment is conscientiously followed. Children should be given smaller doses, according to age. And, above all, don't get frightened. Take the ordinary precautions against inequalities of temperature, and preserve equanimity of mind and temper.

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Toledo is in the midst of a three weeks' art exhibit, the chief interest centering in the extensive collection of paintings selected by Mr. E. D. Libbey, of the well-known firm of cut glass factors and president of the Toledo Musuem of Art, from the salons of Europe, during his summer trip abroad. There are ninety-four canvases on the line, arranged in two galleries in the Gardner block, right in the business heart of the city, and Indianapolis visitors to "The Lady of the Lakes" will do well to bear it in mind. It opened on Wednesday, and each week's exhibit opens on Wednesday of that week, to continue four days. Mr. Libbey is one of the most competent connoisseurs in America, and always is willing to back his judgment with his plentiful means. In addition, the best Toledo artists, including Edmund Osthaus, are well represented, and as Toledo is well provided in this respect, the city is in position to furnish a real treat to lovers of the beautiful in art.

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"In peace, as a wise man, he should make suitable preparation for war."

It is quite likely that Mr. Roosevelt, in developing that part of his message devoted to our national defense, thought not so much of this extract from the Second Satire of Horace as of that better and more applicable form in which it is put by Vegitius: "Who would desire peace should be prepared for war" (Qui disiderat pacem praeparet bellum), but to-day happens to be the birthday of the author of the "Odes" and "Satires" and not that of the author of "Rei Militari," so I give the former precedence. Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) was born at Venusia, Italy, on Dec. 8, 65 B. C., the son of a manumitted slave, and died at Rome, on Nov. 27, 8 B. C., as poet laureate. He was one of the few Roman poets who preferred his independence as a poet to the tempting prizes of political ambition, and his life, therefore, was eminently prosperous and serene. He was the chief lyric poet of the age, and in the whole galaxy of Roman literature he undoubtedly ranks next to Virgil.

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One of the curious coincidents which this day brings to view is the fact that on Dec. 8 Elihu Burritt, "the learned blacksmith," an American reformer and linguist, was born, in 1811, and on Dec. 8 another blacksmith, Robert Collyer, "the blacksmith preacher," an English Unitarian and divine, was born, in 1823. The day, too, is another anniversary that Americans, and especially Americans of the South, would do well to bear annually in mind for great honor, for Dec. 8, in 1765, was the birthday of Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin. His invention, made in 1795, completely revolutionized the whole business of the culture and factoring of cotton, and made the staple what it is to-day, one of the chief of America's agricultural products. It is only within the last two months that the first radical improvement has been made in the gin that Whitney devised on the plantation of the widow of Gen. Nathaniel Greene, while he was teaching school in Georgia. THE GOSSIP.

A Human Cry.

Dear heart, when with a twofold mind
I pray for bitter grace,
And from my pit of torment find
Your breath upon my face,

And hear you without thought of fear
Bid me to guard you well,
And guide your footsteps to win clear—
When my feet walk in hell:

I wonder how can God be glad
To hear men praise Him so
Who makes his piteous earth so sad
A lot to undergo.

Or does He, too, dip feet in fire
And share the thirster's thirst,
And listen to man's great desire
Holding a heart to burst?

—Laurence Housman.

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL, ITS USE AND ABUSE.

By JOHN HABBERTON,
Author of "Helen's Babies," "All He Knew," Etc.

No other class of fiction stories has ever had as great popularity as the modern historical novel. It is unnecessary to give titles of the volumes that have each sold a hundred thousand or more, for they are still to be found in almost numberless advertisements, and the books themselves are so many that the man who has but an hour or two of leisure every day could not read them all in a year. Newness alone cannot account for their great vogue; there are other reasons, some of which are highly creditable to the average novel reader, who is supposed by critics—at least by such critics as do not themselves write novels—to belong to the least intellectual class of adults for whom books are written.

One of these reasons is that a great many fiction readers are delighted at finding some interesting additions to the customary "cast" of characters in novels. All conventional fiction centers on a sentiment called love, and which occasionally in fiction is true to name. "All the world loves a lover," but this does not imply that the world has no heart for the man or woman in whom some other sentiment is uppermost. All the world is given to hero worship, too, and its greatest heroes did not earn their honors by love affairs such as are described in fiction. As to that, few of the greatest novelists gained their prominence by success in treating "the tender passion." Conversation about stories by Scott, Dickens, Thackeray or Hawthorne seldom touches a love passage. Robert Louis Stevenson became immensely popular despite his perfunctory treatment of lovers, and Kipling, who is still the costliest fiction writer of whom publishers know, excludes lovers from almost all his stories. It might be supposed that the example of writers so notable commercially and in the literary sense would have broken the spell that the love story had cast upon authors and publishers alike. Still, old ideals, like old wrongs, die hard.

The present-day historical novel has reached but the first of its possibilities, but even for this it deserves our gratitude. As already intimated, it has added some heroic and otherwise interesting types of character to those with which all readers of fiction are acquainted, and with them it has given us a new lot of scenes, which, with the historic characters, compel much increase and variety of action. Great men of other days have been presented with fair deference to history and biography—some of them in pen pictures absolutely brilliant, and in scenes that have prompted thousands of readers to their first search of pages more serious than fiction. Of most of these great characters it must be said that their appearance in the novels have been, like angels' visits, short and far between, but there is something inspiriting and ennobling in even a momentary glimpse of a great presence.

SHOULD BE IMPROVEMENT.

This being true, there ought to be an improvement all along the line of historical novels. If historic characters, scenes and incidents are really liked by fiction readers, more and higher use should be made of them. Thus far they have been merely accessory to some young woman's love affairs. A great battle is in progress—a battle of which the novel's readers heard something when they were in the history class at school, but the author is evidently going to describe it in full, for he introduces a great general and his staff, describes the position of the troops, tells of the hopes of the army and the Nation, puts some brave words and rapid orders into the general's mouth, and then just as the fine old soldier is about to reproduce the scene which made him famous, up dashes a young woman in tears and a carryall, and the reader learns to his disappointment that the hero of the scene is not to be the renowned general, but a young officer who is detached from the staff to give the young woman safe conduct from the field, and who, of course, is the only man she ever really loved, though two or three others had hopes. The disappointment of the reader might be modified were the young woman specially charming, but by some mysterious chain of coincidence the heroines of the more famous of the new historical novels are very young and uncertain creatures, who tax the patience of their sweethearts greatly, and are endured by the reader principally because of their surroundings.

Why should not the historical novel break with the old topic and avail itself of the many great ones it has at hand? Why should not great characters of history become the novelist's principals, instead of appearing merely as brilliant accessories? Why should not their purposes be the motives of at least a distinct class of the novels of the future? Patriotism, ambition, friendship, daring, self-sacrifice, courage, honor, expediency, statesmanship—any of them have done as much as love to "make the world go round." To say that a romantic story, or even an interesting one, requires love is to beg the question; the imagination of any romancer worthy of the name can place an honest atmosphere of romance about any great character of history.

Some such change will be necessary if the historical novel is to remain popular, for readers of fiction, like all other readers, are progressive. Most of them reach a place where they demand something better than they have had; if they do not find it in fiction they look for it in other books. Yet fondness for good stories is inherent in human nature; men and women who cannot tolerate a novel of the ordinary type will listen eagerly to tales of real people, whether great or simple. Many of the world's historic characters were great as well as real; the "setting" of a story of any of them need not be invented, for its details may already be found in history or biography, and needs only the sympathetic heart and skilled hand to make it interesting to the eye of whoever may read. Stories thus written would capture a class of readers in which publishers delight because it is very large, yet at which romancers look askance—the class that reads the "purpose" novel. There is no class more unjustly abused, for most of its constituents read, not for the purpose which a story is supposed to develop, but to be on the higher plane and enjoy the originality of treatment which any such story presupposes—and also for the rare pleasure of reading a romance which is not the eternal love-story warmed over and served with one or more of the old sauces.

HUMANITY'S NOBLE TRAITS.

But this is not the only class to which historical novels of high quality would appeal. In every grade of human nature, down to the very worst, there is instinctive respect and admiration for nobility of character. The love of man for woman and woman for man is greatly productive of this quality—in real life and occasionally in novels. But the pages of history are full of it; from history the great dramatists drew their noblest characters, and a stage performance of one of the greater historical dramas attracts the simple as well as the learned; no part of the house is more closely packed or more attentive and appreciative than the top—the realm of the "gallery gods." Great poets and painters also seek first for the noble traits of their human subjects; is it too much to hope that novelists shall not fall behind other artists in appreciation of this quality?

Should the historical novel fail to advance upon the lines indicated its sure decadence will be hastened by an abuse which already has become noticeable. It is the twisting and warping of great historic characters to conform to some purpose of an author. Different points of view have caused great differences in estimates of certain characters that have been prominent on the world's great stage, but none of these justify the custom of some novelists to ignore or falsify facts for the sake of some detail of plot or scene. Twenty-five years ago a brilliant lecturer on the battles of the civil war asked a gallant division commander to attend his lectures, as the general's old division would be mentioned frequently and in a manner to elicit applause. The general promised to be present. As he walked away the lecturer called him back and said: "Perhaps I ought to explain a little matter. In the engagements your division held the right of the line, but I have placed it on the left. It makes my lecure go so much better." Some of the new novels have tampered with historic facts quite as unscrupulously; others have gone farther, and with blacking pots and whitewash brush have made unrecognizable nondescripts of some characters that have long been distinct in the public eye. To destroy an actual character is a shameful method of saving a fiction story.

Less bad in intention, but quite as likely to destroy an author's hold on his readers, is the observable tendency to give special attention, in fiction, to a great man's real or alleged weaknesses for the sole purpose of "doing something new." There are kitchen and backstair stories to the discredit of every great character in history, and it is not impossible that some of them are true. Unfortunately it does not follow that possession of the literary instinct is a warrant that the possessor has not also a keen scent for carrion and a fondness for serving it publicly.

Another justifiable fear for the future of the historical novel is based on some indications that political rancor may yet infect the novelist's pen. In American history there are characters who in their days were demigods or demons, according to the political bias of the men who viewed them. Old-time traditions of them have lost nothing while passing down from one generation to another, especially through families that are so industrious as partisans that they have no heart for any other sentiment than worship or hatred. There is no law against the publication of political pamphlets in fiction form, but any publisher who may assist at the opening of old wounds and the disinterment of buried animosities will have a heavy account to settle with his business fraternity.

Thus far the historical novel has been the cause of much unexpected entertainment and trade prosperity; it "toned up" amazingly the possibilities of fiction, so its future should be guarded jealously by readers, critics, authors and publishers. That weak specimens will appear is inevitable, for a successful effort of any kind always prompts many hasty imitations, but there is no good reason to doubt that the better class of novelists will give up new masterpieces if they succeed in emancipating themselves from the thralldom of the love story and possess themselves of the motives that made men great. When this has been done their wits and pens may be trusted for all that should follow.

New York City.